

# Land at Walker's Heath, King's Norton, Birmingham

## Archaeological Desktop Assessment and Evaluation



*understanding heritage matters*

Report No 13XX  
March 2013



*Working for  
Warwickshire*

<b>Project:</b>	Walker's Heath DBA
<b>Commissioned by:</b>	Barratt Homes
<b>Project Report No.</b>	13XX
<b>Site Code:</b>	BW13
<b>NGR:</b>	SP 057 785
<b>Planning Reference:</b>	N/A
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<b>Date:</b>	March 2013
<b>Report reference:</b>	Coutts, C. M. 2013 <i>Land at Walker's Heath King's Norton, Birmingham, Desk-based Assessment and Evaluation</i> , Archaeology Warwickshire Report 13

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## Summary

**An archaeological desktop assessment and evaluation was carried out on land at Walker's Heath, King's Norton, Birmingham, in order to inform any future decisions on development proposals. A major Roman road, Ryknild Street, is thought to run through the western side of the development area and there is evidence for Roman and later settlement in the area. Until the third quarter of the 20th century this area, formerly part of Worcestershire, was largely rural. It was divided up into small fields and pocked with clay pits and ponds. Walker's Heath Road is of some antiquity and is shown on early 19th-century mapping, but the present street layout of the development area dates to the early 1970s, when a housing estate was created. The housing estate was largely demolished a few years ago and the site reverted to rough grass, with each parcel of land fenced off.**

**The evaluation trenches showed that the majority of the area had either been disturbed by the 1970s housing development or did not have significant archaeological remains within it. However one trench in the eastern part of the site contained a series of gullies, one of which produced Roman pottery and a residual sherd of possible Roman pottery was recorded in another trench, suggesting some level of Roman activity in the north-east part of the site. Post-medieval field boundaries and a pond were also recorded.**

## 1 Introduction

1.1 This archaeological desktop assessment was commissioned for an area of land at Walker's Heath, King's Norton, Birmingham, to inform any future development proposals. The site is centred upon map reference SP 057 785 and is currently parcelled-off areas of land formerly occupied by late 20th-century housing. The underlying geology of the area is Boulder Clay (British Geological Survey 1955).

1.2 The main aims of the desktop assessment was to determine, as far as is reasonably possible from existing records, the nature, extent and significance of the historic environment within the site and its immediate environs. It was designed to establish the impact of any future development on the significance of the historic environment and to enable reasoned proposals and decisions to be made whether to mitigate, offset or accept without further intervention that impact, in accordance with IfA Standard and guidance for historic environment desk-based assessment (dated 1994, revision 2011).

1.3 Archaeology (Projects) Warwickshire was commissioned to carry out an archaeological desktop assessment of the site. The research for the report, including a pre-evaluation site visit, took place on 6th February 2013 and sources consulted are listed in Appendix A.

## 2 Methodology

2.1 Archaeological sites consist essentially of surviving evidence of our past interaction with the land and include sites, landscapes and built heritage.

2.2 Sites can date from all periods from the Palaeolithic to modern times and come in a number of forms, including upstanding structures, earthworks, buried features or scatters of

artefacts. They can be ranked in importance into four categories: sites of *national importance*, which will often, but not always be Scheduled Ancient Monuments protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979; sites of *regional importance*; sites of *local importance*; and sites which are too badly damaged to qualify for a higher grading. To these last can be added possible sites for which the evidence is dubious or unclear, and find spots of isolated archaeological material which do not necessarily indicate the presence of a site. The ranking of the importance of a particular site depends on criteria such as those used to assess sites for Scheduling which include *period, rarity, quality of documentation, group value, survival/condition, diversity and potential* (DoE 1990, Annex 4). Historic battlefields are included in a non-statutory register maintained by English Heritage (English Heritage 1995).

2.3 Sites can be affected by development in a variety of ways. Apart from direct destruction or damage by new buildings, roads, car parks or landscaping, a site can be affected by traffic vibration or by changes in the water table. Their settings are also relevant and can be affected by severance. Where the remains are upstanding they can be affected by visual intrusion and particularly where there is public access to a site there may be impacts from noise and loss of amenity.

2.4 The Built Heritage includes buildings, structures, parks and gardens of architectural or historic interest. The most important historic buildings are individually Listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and classified in three grades: Grade I, buildings of exceptional interest; Grade II\*, particularly important buildings of more than special interest; and Grade II, buildings of special interest. Areas of special historical or architectural interest can be designated as Conservation Areas. Other unlisted buildings outside conservation areas can also be of sufficient local interest or importance to merit consideration. Nationally important historic parks and gardens are included in a non-statutory register maintained by English Heritage (English Heritage 1994b) in which they are classified in three grades: Grade I, parks and gardens of exceptional interest; Grade II\*, parks and gardens of great quality; and Grade II, parks and gardens of special interest.

2.5 The Built Heritage can also be affected by development proposals in a number of ways: demolition or partial demolition of a building, visual intrusion, vibration and noise, severance from linked features, changes to the landscape setting and loss of amenity, particularly where there is public access to a building. The settings of buildings, parks and gardens are also vulnerable.

2.6 The first stage of the desktop study was to identify the known archaeological sites and historic buildings within the area. For Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields and Listed Buildings the National Heritage List for England, maintained by English Heritage, was consulted ([list.english-heritage.org.uk](http://list.english-heritage.org.uk)). For other archaeological sites the prime sources were the Birmingham and Worcestershire Historic Environment Records (HER), databases of information about archaeological sites in the area. Relevant published works relating to the archaeology and local history of the area were also consulted. These are listed in Appendix A.

2.7 A high proportion of archaeological sites are discovered from the air, either as upstanding earthworks or as cropmarks. Cropmarks are formed by differential ripening, normally in arable crops, and tend to be particularly good in dry summers. Although many sites in the area have been found as a result of cropmarks they can vary from year to year and

are only ever likely to show a small percentage of buried archaeological features, normally the larger kind such as pits or ditches.

2.8 Further documentary research was carried out in the Worcestershire County Record Office, involving mainly documentary sources giving topographical information which can reveal the location of sites or significant buildings. The documents examined are also listed in Appendix A.

2.9 The site lies wholly within Birmingham, but is close to the border with Worcestershire. The site boundaries are Walker's Heath Road to the east, the rear of Heathside Drive to the west and north and the rear of plots on Monksway to the south.

2.10 A site inspection was carried out in February 2013 to establish the current condition of the site and assess whether any exposures of land existed where archaeological finds might be recovered, or if there was any evidence for the Roman road on the ground. The site was almost entirely covered with short, scrubby grass with a number of mature trees. Each parcel of land was fenced off with metal fencing on concrete posts. This fencing had been broken down in a number of places.

### **3 Archaeological and historical background**

#### **General**

3.1 Walker's Heath was originally a small settlement within the ancient parish of King's Norton, in Worcestershire, and its name thought to have been derived from the name Walker (VCH 1976, 87).

3.2 No archaeological sites or monuments are known from within the proposed development site, although the line of a Roman road, Ryknild Street (also referred to as Ryknield or Icknield Street), is believed to run through it, based on lining up the course of known line of the road to the north and south. This major Roman road runs from the Fosse Way at Bourton-on-the Water, to Templeborough in South Yorkshire and would have been laid out in the 1st century AD as part of the military communication network following the conquest. It is believed to post-date Watling Street (Booth 2006, 503) and a date in the AD 70s has been suggested (Gould 1966). As the site lies close to the present border between Birmingham and Worcestershire both of the Historic Environment Records (HERs) were consulted. Archaeological sites, monuments, events, Listed buildings etc. in the surrounding area are listed in Appendix B (Fig 1):

#### **Prehistoric**

3.3 The earliest find in the area is that of an early Neolithic to Early Bronze Age axe, found to the east (21052 – MBM1792). A single residual sherd of Iron Age pottery was found during excavations at Parson's Hill, to the north (Foard-Colby 2011, 76).

#### **Roman (AD 43 – 410)**

3.4 The application site includes the projected line of the Roman road of Ryknild Street (20577 – MBM2227; WSM30441), which, in this locality, runs from the Roman fort at Metchley, to Alcester in Warwickshire. Extensive archaeological remains of Roman date

have also been found to the south, alongside the Roman road, adjacent to the present Longdales Road (in advance of the new Kings Norton Cemetery). This area was investigated between 2002 and 2007 and included geophysical survey, trial-trenching and excavation, watching brief and salvage recording (Jones *et al* 2008, 1). These remains include buildings and enclosures, extending over 200m west from the road frontage itself, dating from the 2nd to the 4th century and probably involved livestock management (20685 – MBM2342; EBM 333, 260, 261). The investigations suggested that the layout of field boundaries running at right-angles to the Roman road, and shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map, may be of Roman origin (Jones 2008, 81-4).

3.5 To the north of the application site, further remains of Roman date have been recorded. In 1949 finds of Roman pottery were unearthed during building work at Parson's Hill; later excavation showed evidence for gullies and gravel surfaces with layers of charcoal and daub indicating timber buildings, dating to the 1st to 3rd century (02939 – MBM824; Hodder 2004). At Parson Mews, further to the north, a large boundary ditch of 1st- to 2nd-century date has been recorded when excavation was being undertaken ahead of residential development at the Old Bowling Green (20768 – MBM2425; Foard-Colby 2011). The seventeen sherds of Roman pottery were small and heavily abraded (Rátkai 2011, 76a).

3.6 In the adjacent Worcestershire parish of Wythall, an area of Roman settlement has been uncovered in a series of evaluations at Lilycroft Farm (WSM39450). Several features, postholes and gullies were recorded. There was also a possible trackway from Ryknild Street to the enclosure, and a possible wooden structure. To the north of the area a Roman coin was found (03262 – MBM969).

## **Medieval and Post-medieval (1066 – 1800)**

3.6 King's Norton was a settlement in the medieval period (20635 – MBM2288) and Walkers Heath is recorded in 1314 as *le Walkerishethe*. The name derives from a family name; John, son of Richard le Walkere de Kyngsnorton was documented here in 1340. There are a number of moated sites in the area, some of which will have their origins in the medieval period. Pool Farm Moat lies to the south of the application area (03007 – MBM889); it has now been filled in and a building constructed on the site. Excavation took place there between 1949 and 1956 by pupils from King's Norton School. A medieval moated site lies to the north-east of the application site (03006 – MBM888). Bell's Farm moat has largely been obliterated, but it has been suggested that the west arm was originally a gravel or marl pit (01159 – MBM107).

3.7 Trial trenching in 1998 recorded remains of the 13th-century settlement, sealed by a soil layer which was cut by layer ridge and furrow (WSM26884). Geophysical survey was also carried out (WSM30057). Trial trenching at 2-3 The Green, King's Norton, recorded a stone wall base, probably the footings for a medieval timber wall (20388 – MBM2038). Excavations at Parson's Hill recorded a medieval ditch; the thirteen small medieval sherds were very abraded and it was suggested they represented plough-soil scatters (Rátkai 2011b, 76).

3.8 A silver penny of Edward I (1272-1307) was found when gardening to the north of the site (04765 – MBM1625).

3.9 Walkers Heath Farmhouse, to the south, is a Listed Building; the barn and outbuildings form a group, dating to the 17th or early 18th century with some timber-framing (01232 -MBM181). Walkers Heath Farm cart shed is a Listed building of 18th-century date (02480 – MBM746). Walkers Heath Farm barn dated to the 17th century, but has been demolished (03939 – MBM1565).

3.10 A fieldwalking survey, carried out in 1997 (WSM26332), recorded ridge and furrow (WSM24580) as well as a large pond, marked as Old Clay Pit on 1st edition Ordnance Survey map (WSM24582). Ridge and furrow also exists to the north-west, near Kings Norton (20065 – MBM1711). Medieval ridge and furrow has also been identified to the south-east on the other side of Walkers Heath Road (WSM12152) and to the south (WSM24580); this has a medieval holloway to its east (WSM93277).

3.11 A 17th-century or earlier wall has been recorded to the west (20700 – MBM2356).

3.12 A programme of archaeological work took place at Moundsley Hall (WSM40824), to the east. Moundsley Hall was a timber-framed manor house built some time before 1521 and encased in brick in the 19th century (WSM01277). Its gardens are recorded on the Historic Environment Record (WSM40521). A building, now demolished, was recorded in the mid-20th century (WSM44772) which replaced the timber-framed building. There is a cart shed south-east of Moundsley Hall dating to c.1800 (WSM01844). The lodge at Moundsley Hall dates to the late 19th century (03840 – MBM1474) and is a Listed Building. There is a pond west of Moundsley Hall thought to have medieval origins (WSM07415) and other medieval fishponds exist further to the east (WSM01845). Moundsley Park Farm (formerly Headley Fields farm) is a mid 18th-century building (WSM01843).

3.13 World War II bombing raids are recorded on the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record in Wythall, Worcestershire (WSM37210). An undated linear feature shows up on aerial photographs to the south; it is unclear whether this is likely to be a road, pipeline or ditch (WSM24581).

## Map evidence

3.14 The earliest map of the area is the 1831 Ordnance Survey map, drawn up at one inch to one mile (Fig 2). The map was drawn in four quarters and unfortunately the area of Walker's Heath straddles the north-western and north-eastern quarters (hence the splice line running up the centre of Fig. 2). The map shows the steep drop in land on the western side of the site and the farms along the western side of the road. The line of the Roman road runs straight to the south but it is not indicated cutting through the present site. Indeed, it could be argued that the road was re-routed to the east to avoid the steeply sloping ground, and that the line of modern Walkers Heath Road does follow the Roman road. The map was electroplated later in the 19th century, up to 1871, to show revisions, largely associated with the railways.

3.15 The King's Norton tithe map of 1846 shows this area, although the microfilm copy is a little blurred (Fig 3). Small fields are shown either side of the main road and there is evidence of occupation, probably in the form of farms, on the west side of the road. The fields either side of the road respect it, suggesting they post-date the road. They similarly appear to respect the line of the Worcester and Birmingham canal to the west, which was built between 1793 and 1807. However, King's Norton's Inclosure Act dates to 1772 and the majority of

the fields are likely to date to this time; the fields and the canal follow the topography of the land.

3.16 By the time of the 1884 First Edition Ordnance Survey map the farms on the western side of the main road are named. The field boundaries are shown lined with trees. 'Ellesmere' is the name of the farm whose buildings occupied the eastern part of the site, between Walkers Heath Road and the rear of the properties that formerly stood on Monksway (Fig 4).

3.17 No Second Edition map (early years of the 20th century) of the area was located, either in the Worcestershire County Record Office or online, but comparison of earlier and later mapping suggests that this would not have shown any significant changes.

3.18 A revised 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map was published in 1936 (Fig 5). This shows the Ellesmere buildings as they were in 1884, with some additional boundaries. However, none of the features correspond to features in the evaluation trenches. The area to the north-west of the site has been developed into a brickworks with a large clay pit to its south and other evidence of excavation. The stretch of Walkers Heath Road to the east is named as 'Icknield Street Roman Road'.

### Post-medieval buildings

3.19 There are no buildings currently on the development site. The buildings constructed in the early 1970s have been demolished. The farm Ellesmere previously occupied the central eastern part of the site and the construction of buildings here are likely to have damaged any underlying archaeological deposits.

### Hedgerows

3.20 The site does not have any hedges within it nor on its boundaries therefore Hedgerow Regulations are not a consideration for this site.

### Designated heritage sites

3.21 There are no Registered Parks or Gardens (English Heritage) on or adjacent to the site. There are no Registered Battlefield sites (English Heritage) on or adjacent to the site. There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments or other legally designated heritage sites within the proposed site, or close by.

### Conservation Area

3.22 King's Norton Conservation area lies some 500m to the north-west but the proposal site does not lie within a Conservation Area. As such the area is not subject to special Conservation Area controls and Conservation Area Consent will not to be necessary for work on the site.

## 4 Previous and potential impact

4.1 Map regression and consultation of available sources indicates that the site was largely undeveloped until the 1970s, when the housing estate was constructed. Gardens associated with the houses, particularly those to the rear of the houses, will have been subject to less disturbance, and archaeological features could well be preserved in these areas. The foundations of the 1970s houses, garages, and associated services will have severely impacted on any underlying archaeology which may have existed in the area.

## 5 Desk-based assessment conclusions

5.1 The assessment demonstrates that the proposal site lies outside of the historic core of King's Norton, in an area that was farmland until the later part of the 20th century. Consultation of the Historic Environment Record and English Heritage databases shows no *known* archaeological sites of any period within the proposal area, although the line of the major Roman road, Ryknild Street, is deemed to run through the west side of the site. It is possible though that this stretch of Walkers Heath Road, to the east, follows the line of Ryknild Street, avoiding the drop in land to the west. This would suggest a higher possibility of Roman occupation on the eastern side of the site. There is evidence for Roman occupation to both the north and south of the site, with a significant settlement 600m to the south. Prehistoric finds have been identified in small quantities. Medieval archaeological deposits have been recorded to the north. A number of post-medieval farms and other sites existed in the area, along with field boundaries, ponds and clay extraction pits. It remains a possibility that buried archaeological remains of the Roman, medieval, or post-medieval periods might exist on the site and could be affected by any development.

5.2 There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments or Registered Parks in the immediate vicinity of the site; and no Listed Buildings located close to the area.

5.3 The proposal site does not lie within a Conservation Area so this will not affect any proposals.

## 6 Evaluation

6.1 Twelve trenches were excavated around the site, in positions previously agreed with Mike Hodder, Birmingham City Archaeologist. Three trenches were targeted at the area thought to include the Roman road in the western part of the site, while the remainder were laid out so as to sample the rest of the site. The trenches were 2m wide and excavated using a 24 tonne, tracked excavator with a toothless bucket.

### Trench 1

6.2 This trench was located in the northernmost part of the site, north of Heathside Drive. The trench ran NW-SE with an additional stretch projecting south from the south-east end. No further trenches were excavated north of Heathside Drive as the remaining area was occupied by a builders' compound. The surrounding area was flat ground, with no trees in the immediate vicinity of trench. Natural clay (104) was reached at a depth of 0.70m. A single ditch (105) was recorded at the middle of the trench, cutting the natural clay, believed

to be a pre-enclosure, post-medieval field boundary, the fill of which (106) contained a residual fragment of abraded possible Roman pottery and a fragment of hand-made roof tile. Above the natural clay was a 0.10-0.25 thick layer of brown clay loam, probably a former ploughsoil (103), which was overlaid by up to 0.15m of red clay (102) in an area in the western part of the trench. This clay is likely to be associated with the 1970s estate construction. The clay and ploughsoil were overlain by 0.25-0.30m of clay loam which contained large amounts of building debris (101).

## Trench 2

6.3 Thus trench was located north of Monksway. Natural clay was reached at around 0.40m below ground level. In between the heavily disturbed topsoil (200) and geological natural (202) was a layer of modern hardcore and rubble (201). It appeared that the open-space between houses had been occupied by concrete hardstanding in this area. No archaeological finds were recovered or features were located.

## Trench 3

6.4 This trench lay south of Heathside Drive and ran east-west. Natural clay (312) was reached at around 0.34m below ground level. At the east end of the trench, three separate gully cuts were found. The first gully (302) ran SSW-NNE, with a grey clay loam fill (303), however the gully was waterlogged and not excavated. The second gully (304) ran SSW-NNE and the third (306) ran SW-NE, with an upper and lower fill (307 and 313). A single fragment of abraded Roman pottery was found in the fill (305) of gully 304. The western part of the trench was disturbed by modern services. A modern pipe trench (310) cut into the natural clay with redeposited clay as the fill (311). The pipe trench led into a square man hole cut (308) filled with a brick inspection chamber (309).

## Trench 4

6.5 Trench 4 was located south of Heathside Drive and could not be excavated in the straight line envisaged due to the presence of mature trees. Natural clay (410) was reached at around 0.20-0.40m depth. The natural clay was overlain by 0.10m of brown clay loam (401), probably the truncated remains of a former subsoil. The natural clay was cut by a 1.80m wide linear feature (408) with a fill of dark grey brown clay loam (409), the line of which corresponds to a field boundary shown on 19th-century mapping. The natural was also cut by a 0.80m wide modern pipe trench (402 - fill 403), a modern pit filled with concrete (404 – fill 405), and another modern pit with a disturbed humic loam fill (406 – fill 407). At the north end of the trench was a modern concrete and brick feature (411/412). The topsoil (400) was full of modern rubbish and between 0.10m and 0.30m thick.

## Trench 5

6.6 Trenches 5-7 were excavated west of Heathside Drive in the area thought to contain the line of the Roman road. Trench 5 was directly west of the north-west corner of Heathside Drive. The ground here slopes down towards the west. Natural clay (502) was reached at around 1.00m below ground level. The stratigraphy of this trench comprises of topsoil (500), a rubble and clay layer (501), and geological natural (502). A modern pipe trench (503) cut through from the topsoil, into the natural below and was filled with a dark grey clay loam (504).



## Trench 6

6.7 Like Trench 5, this trench is located on a westward slope, and was positioned in an effort to find the possible Roman road. Natural clay was reached at around 0.75m depth. Cutting the clay in the northern end of the trench was the side of a large, shallow pit (604), the lower fill of which was a layer of gravel (602), in which a small amount of pearlware and other post-medieval material was found. An upper silty fill (605) did not produce any finds. The feature can be seen as a pond on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map and may originally have been a clay extraction pit. The upper fill, and natural clay elsewhere in the trench, was overlaid by 0.30m-0.55m of brown silty clay (601), probably the remains of the former ploughsoil. The 0.20m thick topsoil (600) was relatively undisturbed in this trench.

## Trench 7

6.8 Trench 7 ran down the slight slope to the west, again west of Heathside Drive. Natural clay (708) was reached at a depth of around 0.40m. The natural was cut by a post-medieval field boundary ditch (704), the fill (705) of which contained 18th-century coarseware, hand-made roof tile and modern window glass. At the west end of the trench a shallow gully cut (706) was part-excavated. The fill was a dark brown sandy loam with charcoal flecks (707) and contained three fragments of hand-made roof tile, a fragment of pale green window glass and a colourless fragment of vessel glass, perhaps from a wine glass (707). The former ploughsoil was a layer of, 0.20m thick, brown sandy clay, (701). In the south-east end of the trench the foundation cut (702) for one of the 1970s houses could be seen, filled with disturbed clay soil and modern debris (703), overlain by 0.30m of mixed soil and modern rubble (709).

## Trench 8

6.9 Trench 8 ran SW-NE, on flat ground in between a number of trees, directly south of Monksway. Natural clay was reached at around 0.44m depth. The trench had no discernible features and consisted of topsoil (800), brown sandy clay loam ploughsoil (801) and the natural yellow clay with pebbles (802). Ingress of water meant that the lower part of the trench remained underwater for the duration of the project.

## Trench 9

6.10 This trench zigzagged between a series of mature trees, in the southern part of the central block between Monksway and Heathside Drive. A single undated gully cut (902) was located in the northern part of the trench. No finds were recovered from the fill (903). Natural clay (904) was reached at around 0.70m depth, overlain by 0.50m of brown sandy loam (901) and 0.20m of topsoil (900), which varied in depth between 0.22m in the north end of the trench and 0.50m in the south.

## Trench 10

6.11 The trench ran SE-NW, to the east of Monksway. It was originally to have been sited further east but this was an area of concrete hardstanding, so was relocated to more accessible ground. Although the trench was located in an area that could have produced evidence for the farm 'Ellesmere' shown on 19th-century mapping, the ground was heavily disturbed by

modern activity. Natural clay (1017) was reached at around 0.60m below ground level and was overlain by 0.35m of dark brown sandy clay ploughsoil (1001). These were cut by a number of modern pits and gullies. Pits 1002, 1010, 1012 and 1014 all contained modern debris such as concrete, plastic fragments and roots (fills 1003, 1011, 1013, 1015). The gullies (1004, 1006 and 1008) varied in width between 0.55m and 0.95m, with fills of clay (1005) or clay loam (1007, 1009) and none produced any finds; it is possible, from their locations, that they are modern service trenches.

## Trench 11

6.12 This trench ran roughly north-south, to the east of Monksway. Natural clay (1108) was reached at around 0.70 below ground level. The natural clay was cut by two modern sewer trenches (1104 and 1106; fills 1105 and 1107) and pit (1102) with a drain in its fill (1103) with corresponding fills. A 0.60m thick layer of reddish brown clay loam containing large amounts of rubble (1101) overlay the natural clay and was itself overlain by 0.10m-0.15m of dark grey brown topsoil (1100).

## Trench 12

6.13 Trench 12 was excavated directly south of Monksway in the southernmost part of the site. Natural clay (1203) was reached at around 0.30 below ground level and was overlaid by a scant (0.10m thick) layer of dark brown clay loam (1201) in the western end of the trench, but in the majority of the area by a layer of rubble with modern building debris and rubbish (1202). The 0.10m-0.20m thick topsoil (1200) also contained modern debris.

# 7 Evaluation conclusions

7.1 Two small, abraded sherds of pottery were recovered. The residual sherd from Trench 1 was identified by Stephanie Rátkai as 'probably Roman' and the sherd from gully 304 in Trench 3 as 'Roman'. This suggests that the gullies in Trench 3 are Roman features, but the western part of the trench had been disturbed by modern services.

7.2 There is no evidence for medieval activity from the evaluation.

7.3 Three post-medieval field boundaries were recorded during the evaluation, two of which are indicated on 19th-century mapping and one which may be a pre-enclosure period boundary that is not shown on the tithe map or First Edition 1:2500 map. A pond was also recorded adjacent to the line of one of the field boundaries.

7.4 Although we attempted to locate all the trenches away from former buildings and known service trench runs, in the majority of the trenches the ground was disturbed by modern services, such as sewer trenches, pipe trenches and rubbish pits, some of the latter may have been associated with the demolition and clearance of the estate, or even of subsequent activity on site.

7.5 The evaluation confirms much of the results of the desk based assessment, which suggested that the site remained part of agricultural fields for most of its history until the creation of the recent housing development, which may have had some impact on potential archaeological remains either during the construction, use or demolition phases. Some

evidence of earlier Roman activity did survive, although no evidence of the Roman road was revealed. The recorded gullies may be associated with Romano-British agricultural or settlement activity on or close to the site,

## Acknowledgements

Archaeology (Projects) Warwickshire would like to thank James Mooney of Barratt Homes for commissioning the work. Thanks to Mike Hodder for preparing the Brief. Thanks to Stephanie Rátkai for kindly identifying the two sherds of Roman pottery.

And to staff of Worcestershire Archives for assisting in the learning curve of using The Hive.

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## Appendix B Archaeological sites, monuments and events in the area

### Listed Buildings

MBM107	Bell's Farmhouse	16th century
MBM181	Walkers Heath Farmhouse	17th century
MBM746	Cart shed at Walkers Heath Farm	18th century
MBM1474	Moundsley Lodge	19th century

### Other HER records

MBM824	Parsons Hill Roman occupation site and pottery	1st-3rd century AD
MBM888	Bell's Farm Moat	Medieval
MBM889	Pool Farm moat	Medieval
MBM969	Broad Meadows Lane coin	Roman
MBM1565	Walkers Heath Farm barn	17th century
MBM1625	Walton Grove penny	13th–14th century
MBM1711	King's Norton ridge and furrow	Medieval
MBM1792	Prehistoric axe	Neolithic – Bronze Age
MBM2038	King's Norton excavation, 2-3 The Green	Medieval
MBM2227	Icknield Street, Roman road	Roman
MBM2288	King's Norton medieval village	Medieval
MBM2425	Parson's Hill evaluation	Roman
MBM2356	Redditch Road wall	Possible 17th century
MBM2342	Longdales Road Roman settlement	Roman
WSM24580	Ridge and furrow	medieval
WSM24581	Cropmark (linear feature), Walkers Heath	Unassigned (1st-18th century)
WSM24582	Old clay pit, Walker's Heath	Post-medieval 16th-19th century
WSM26332	Fieldwalking survey	
WSM26884	Walker's Heath evaluation 1998	
WSM30057	Geophysical survey 1998	
WSM30441	Ryknield Street Roman road	Roman
WSM39597	Archaeological recording at Moundsley Hall	Post-medieval
WSM41755	Desk-based assessment, Wythall	n/a
WSM44772	Site of building at Moundsley Hall	20th century
WSM01843	Moundsley Park Farm	18th-21st century

	(formerly Headley Fields Farm)	
WSM01844	Cart shelter, south east of Moundsley Hall	19th-21st century
WSM01277	Moundsley Hall	16th-20th century
WSM01845	Fishponds, west bank of Chin Brook, south of Druids Lane	Medieval 11th-16th century
WSM03277	Holloway, Gay Hill Lane	11th-18th century
WSM07415	Pond, west of Moundsley Hall	11th-21st century
WSM12152	Ridge and furrow, west of Moundsley Hall	11th-16th century
WSM39450	Roman farmstead, Lilycroft Farm	1st-5th century
WSM40521	Moundsley Hall, landscape gardens and parkland	16th-21st century

## Events

EBM260	Longdales Road excavation	2003
EBM261	Longdales Road geophysics	2003
EBM333	Longdales Road (Intervention)	2006
EBM407	Walker's Heath evaluation	1997-98
EBM629	2-3 The Green watching brief	1985
WSM37210	World War 2 bombing raids, Bomb Site	World War Two, 1939—1945 AD
WSM26332	Fieldwalking survey, Icknield Street, Walker's Heath	1997
WSM26884	Evaluation, Icknield Street, Walkers heath	1998
WSM30057	Geophysical survey, Icknield Street, Walker's Heath	1998
WSM40824	Archaeological Intervention, Moundsley Hall	2009

## Appendix C List of Contexts

<i>Context</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Comments/depth</i>
100	Topsoil	0.20-0.22m
101	Layer with modern building debris	0.25-0.30m
102	Layer of red clay with building debris	0.15m
103	Layer of brown clay with pebbles	0.10-0.15m, old ploughsoil?
104	Geological natural yellow clay	
105	Ditch	1.02m wide
106	Fill of ditch 105	0.18m
200	Topsoil disturbed with hardcore	0.10m-0.15m
201	Hardcore, deeper at the west end of trench	Modern; 0.30m-0.63m
202	Geological natural	
300	Topsoil with charcoal and modern rubbish inclusions	0.10m-0.18m
301	Layer of subsoil	0.24m-0.38m
302	Gully	Not excavated
303	Fill of gully 302, grey clay loam with small pebbles	
304	Gully, linear with very sharp sloping sides and flattish base	0.12m
305	Fill of gully 304, grey clay loam with small to medium pebbles	Contains possible Roman pottery
306	Gully, linear cut with very sharp sloping sides and uneven rounded base	0.14m
307	Fill of gully 306, grey clay loam with frequent small to medium pebbles	0.08m
308	Manhole cut	Modern
309	Fill of manhole cut 308	Modern
310	Pipe trench linear cut	Modern
311	Fill of pipe trench cut 310, redeposited clay natural	
312	Geological natural	
313	Fill of gully linear cut 306 under 307, yellow clay loam with occasional small pebbles	0.06m
400	Topsoil	0.10m-0.30m
401	Subsoil, ploughsoil	0.10m
402	Pipe trench cut	Not excavated
403	Fill of gully 402, grey brown clay	
404	Modern pit	Not excavated
405	Fill, concrete	Not excavated
406	Modern pit	
407	Fill of modern pit 406, grey brown humic loam with tree roots and very large pebbles	



<i>Context</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Comments/depth</i>
408	Linear feature W-E	Old field boundary? Not excavated
409	Fill of 408, dark grey brown loam with small pebbles	Not excavated
410	Geological natural	
411	Cut for feature 412	
412	Concrete/brick feature at north end of trench	
500	Topsoil	0.10m-0.20m
501	Layer of mid brown sandy clay with brick fragments, large pebbles and concrete	0.80m
502	Geological natural	Starts at 1.00m depth
503	Modern pipe trench	0.50m
504	Pipe trench fill	
600	Topsoil	0.20m
601	Layer of brown silty clay, old ploughsoil	0.30m-0.55m
602	Fill of 604, gravel, curving spread of small river pebbles	Post-medieval finds
603	Geological natural	
604	Cut, circular/sub-circular	Old clay pit/pond?
605	Fill of cut 604, dark grey silt	0.20m-0.25m
700	Topsoil	0.20m
701	Layer of brown sandy clay, sub-soil	0.20m
702	Cut in E part of trench	Cut for house/garage?
703	Fill of cut 702, modern debris	
704	Cut for field boundary	
705	Fill of cut 704, grey brown clay	
706	Gully cut in west end of trench	0.06m
707	Fill of gully cut 706, dark brown sandy loam with charcoal flecks	0.06m
708	Geological natural	
709	Layer of brown sandy clay	Old ploughsoil
710	Layer of mixed soil and rubble at south-east end of trench	0.30m
800	Topsoil	0.20m
801	Layer of brown sandy clay loam ploughsoil	0.24m
802	Geological natural	
900	Topsoil/churned, dark grey brown humic clay,	0.22m-0.50m
901	Layer of brown sandy clay loam	old ploughsoil - 0.50m
902	Linear gully cut	
903	Fill of gully cut 902, greyish brown clay loam with occasional small pebbles	

<i>Context</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Comments/depth</i>
904	Geological natural	
1000	Topsoil	0.25m-0.30m
1001	Layer of dark brown sandy clay	old ploughsoil 0.35m
1002	Modern pit (square)	
1003	Fill of pit 1002, very dark grey-black humic loam with concrete, wood, plastic etc.	
1004	Gully	
1005	Fill of gully 1004, reddish brown clay	
1006	Linear gully cut	
1007	Fill of linear gully cut 1006, dark grey-brown clay loam	Modern fill, not excavated
1008	Linear cut	
1009	Fill of linear cut 1008, dark brown clay loam with high density of roots	
1010	Modern rubbish pit	
1011	Fill of rubbish pit 1010	
1012	Pit that cuts geological natural	
1013	Fill of pit 1012, dark grey grit with coal, ash and rubbish inclusions	
1014	Pit, sub square partly under south-east section	Modern pit?
1015	Fill of pit 1014, dark grey with fragments of plastic	
1016	Layer of dark grey brown humic soil with modern debris	0.30m
1017	Geological natural	
1100	Topsoil	0.10m-0.15m
1101	Layer of reddish brown clay loam with modern rubble	0.60m
1102	Modern pit	
1103	Fill of modern pit 1102, yellowy brown with red clay	
1104	Sewer trench	
1105	Fill of sewer trench 1104, brown clay loam	
1106	Service trench	Sewer pipe visible inside the trench
1107	Fill of service trench 1106, reddish clay with sewer pipe in	
1108	Geological natural	
1200	Topsoil	West 0.10m East 0.20m
1201	Subsoil	0.10m
1202	Layer of redeposited rubble/rubbish	Not at west end of trench
1203	Geological natural	

## Appendix D: List of Finds

Context	Material	Quantity	Date/Comments
106	Pottery	1	very abraded, possibly Roman
106	Roof tile	1	hand-made
305	Pottery	1	very abraded, Roman
602	Pottery	3	pearlware
602	Tile	1	1 x ceramic land-drain fragment
			2 x hand-made roof tile
602	Glass	1	green vessel glass, post-medieval
705	Pottery	1	18th-century coarseware
705	Glass	1	modern window glass
705	Roof tile	1	hand-made
707	Pottery	3	1 x 18th/19th-century black-glazed coarseware
			2 x modern glazed ware
707	Roof tile	3	hand-made
707	Glass	2	1 x pale green window glass,
			1 x colourless vessel glass (wine glass?)

**BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL  
DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE  
2012/08088/PA**

**Land off Walkers Heath Road, centred on Monksway (grid ref 405700, 278500)  
Erection of 127 dwellings, highway works, parking and landscape works  
Brief for *Archaeological Desk-based Assessment and Field Evaluation* to  
accompany a planning application**

### **1.Summary**

*Proposed development at land off Walkers Heath Road is likely to affect below-ground archaeological remains of Roman and medieval date. This brief is for the assessment of the impact of the proposed development on archaeological remains, consisting of an **archaeological desk-based assessment and field evaluation by excavated trenches**. This will determine the need for preservation of archaeological remains and/or for further archaeological excavation in advance of commencement of development.*

### **2.Site location and description**

The site lies to the west of Walkers Heath Road and is centred on the present Monksway. It was formerly occupied by 20<sup>th</sup> century housing, now demolished.

### **3.Planning background**

Because the site may contain archaeological remains which would be affected by the proposed redevelopment, an assessment of its archaeological implications is required in advance of consideration of the proposals and must accompany a planning application. This is in accordance with paragraph 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy 8.36 of the City Council's Unitary Development Plan, Policy SP50 of the City Council's Draft Core Strategy, the City Council's Archaeology Strategy (Supplementary Planning Guidance) and the City Council's Local Validation Criteria. The archaeological assessment will enable appropriate archaeological mitigation strategies to be devised. The mitigation strategies may involve modification of site layout or foundation design to ensure in situ preservation of archaeological remains, or, if this is not feasible, **full recording of archaeological remains in advance of development followed by analysis and publication of the results**.

### **4.Existing archaeological information**

The application site includes the line of a Roman road running from the Roman fort at Metchley to Alcester. To the south, alongside the Roman road and adjacent to the present Longdales Road (Kings Norton Cemetery), extensive archaeological remains of Roman date included buildings and enclosures, extending over 200m beyond the road frontage, dating from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 4<sup>th</sup> century and probably used for livestock management. Just to the north of the application site, near Lazy Hill (Parsons Hill), there were gullies and gravel floors with layers of charcoal and daub indicating timber buildings, dating to the 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> century, and at Parsons Mews to the north (Old Bowling Green) a large boundary ditch of 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> century date was found. A medieval moated site lay to the south of the application site.

### **5.Requirements for work**

The archaeological desk-based assessment and archaeological field evaluation are required to define the likely extent, survival and significance of archaeological remains in the area of the proposed development, so that appropriate mitigation strategies can be devised. The mitigation strategies may involve modification of site layout or foundation design to ensure in situ preservation of archaeological remains, or, if this is not feasible, full recording of archaeological remains in advance of development through archaeological excavation followed by analysis and publication of the results.

In particular, the archaeological desk-based assessment and archaeological field evaluation must address the following:

- (i) The survival of features and deposits, particularly those of Roman date;
- (ii) The survival of remains of past environmental conditions and industrial residues;
- (iii) The relationship of the site to other Roman sites in the vicinity;
- (iv) The potential contribution of the site to an understanding of the historic development of this part of Birmingham;
- (v) The potential contribution of the site to the aims of the West Midlands regional research framework for archaeology.

## **6.Stages of work**

- (i) The extent, survival and significance of archaeological remains on the proposed development site, as described in part 5 above, are to be assessed by site inspection and a search of published and unpublished written records, illustrations and maps, and archaeological and geotechnic records, and a comparison with other sites in Birmingham and the west midlands. Key sources are listed at the end of this brief.
- (ii) The archaeological field evaluation is to consist of excavated trenches at least 2m wide located so as to sample all parts of the site. At least two trenches must include the line of the Roman road and land immediately adjoining it. The exact location of each trench is to be agreed on site with the Planning Archaeologist prior to commencement. Surface deposits in each trench are to be mechanically removed, under archaeological supervision. Subsequent excavation is to be entirely manual. Excavation in each trench is to be sufficient to define, record and sample all archaeological features encountered. The potential of deposits for environmental analysis and for analysis of industrial residues must be assessed. Finds are to be cleaned, marked and bagged and any remedial conservation work undertaken.

## **7.Standards and Staffing**

The archaeological desk-based assessment and archaeological field evaluation are to be carried out in accordance with the Code of Conduct, Standards and Guidance of the Institute for Archaeologists and relevant English Heritage guidance, and all staff are to be suitably qualified and experienced for their roles in the project. It is recommended that the project be under the direct supervision of a Member or Associate Member of the Institute for Archaeologists.

## **8.Written Scheme of Investigation**

Potential contractors should present a Written Scheme of Investigation that which details methods and staffing. It is recommended that the proposal be submitted to the City Council's Planning Archaeologist before a contractor is commissioned, to ensure that it meets the requirements of the brief.

## **9.Monitoring**

The archaeological desk-based assessment and archaeological field evaluation must be carried out to the satisfaction of Birmingham City Council, and will be monitored by the Planning Archaeologist. At least five working days notice of commencement of the evaluation must be given to the Planning Archaeologist, so that monitoring meetings can be arranged. At least one monitoring meeting will take place during the evaluation.

## **10.Reporting**

The results of the archaeological desk-based assessment and archaeological field evaluation are to be presented as a written report, containing appropriate illustrations and a copy of this brief.

The evaluation report should contain the following:

- (i) An analytical summary of features and deposits;
- (ii) Appropriate plans and sections;
- (iii) A summary of finds;
- (iv) A discussion of the results in relation to the aims set out in Part 5 above;
- (v) A copy of this brief.

**An electronic copy in pdf format** must be sent to the Planning Archaeologist. It is recommended that a draft report be sent to the Planning Archaeologist for comment before a final report is produced.

## **11.Archive deposition**

The written, drawn and photographic records of the archaeological desk-based assessment and archaeological field evaluation, together with any finds, must be deposited with an appropriate repository within a reasonable time of completion, following consultation with the Planning Archaeologist.

## **12.Publication**

The written report will become publicly accessible, as part of the Birmingham Historic Environment Record, within six months of completion. The contractor must submit a short summary report for inclusion in *West Midlands Archaeology* and summary reports to appropriate national period journals.

On completion of the project the contractor must complete the obligatory fields of the OASIS form and submit an electronic version of the report to OASIS (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/oasis>)

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

Date prepared: 23 January 2013

Planning Archaeologist: Dr Michael Hodder 0121-464 7797

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Monksway brief DBA and eval.doc

**Key sources:**

*Birmingham City Council Historic Environment Record*

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West Midlands Archaeological Research Framework

<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/iaa/departments/archaeology/research/wmrrfa/index.aspx>



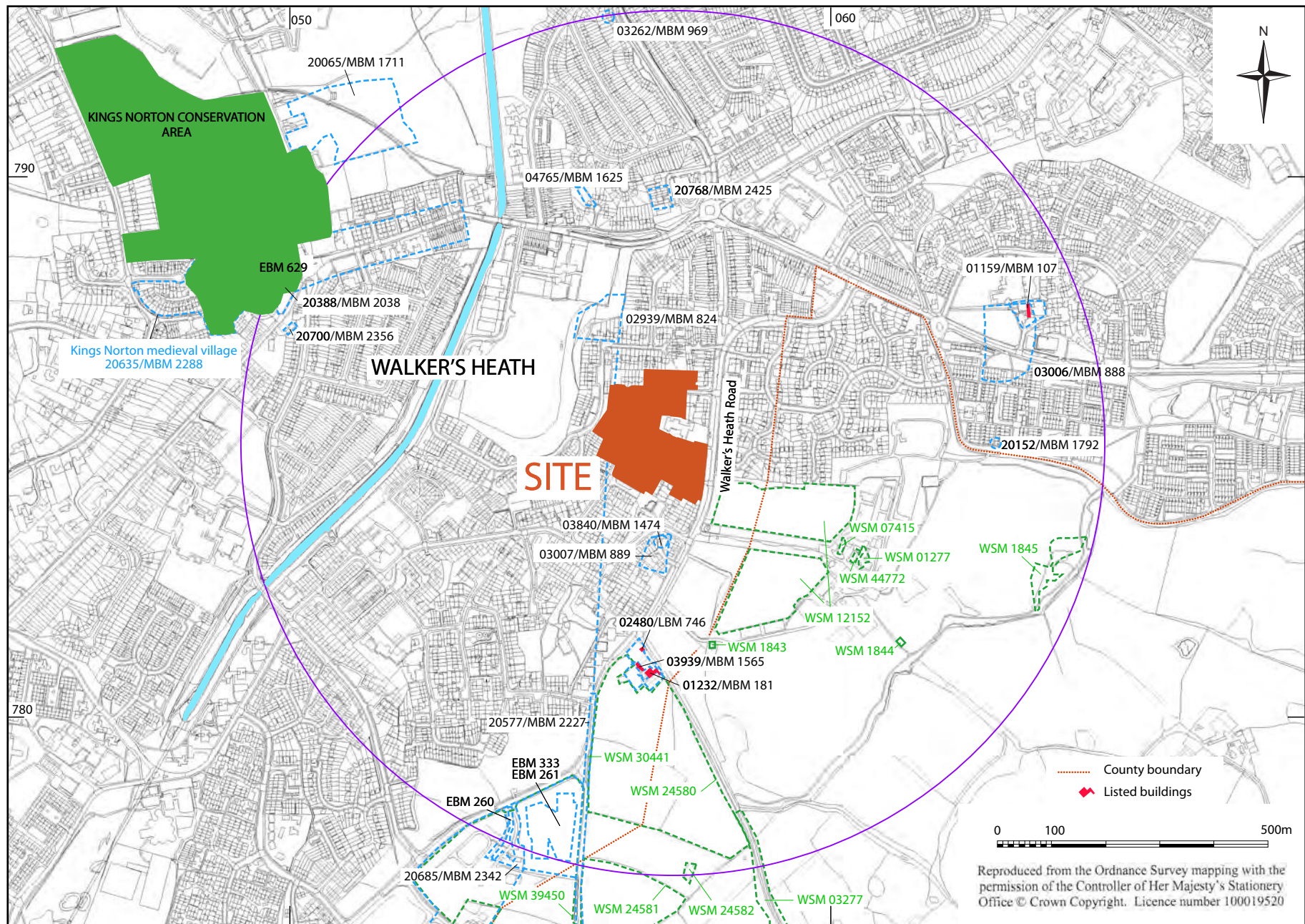


Fig 1: Site location



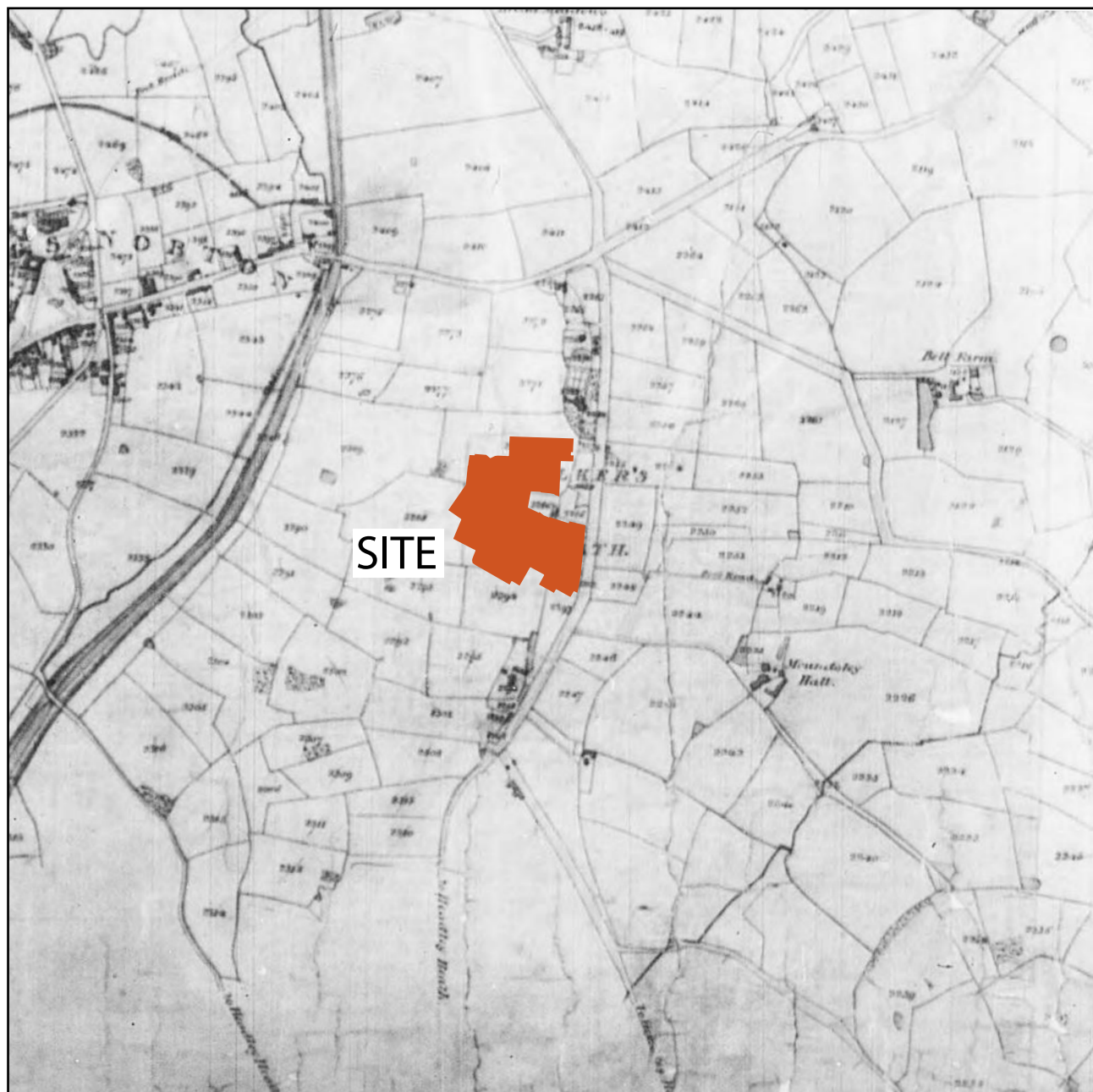


Fig 2: Detail from 1846 tithe map

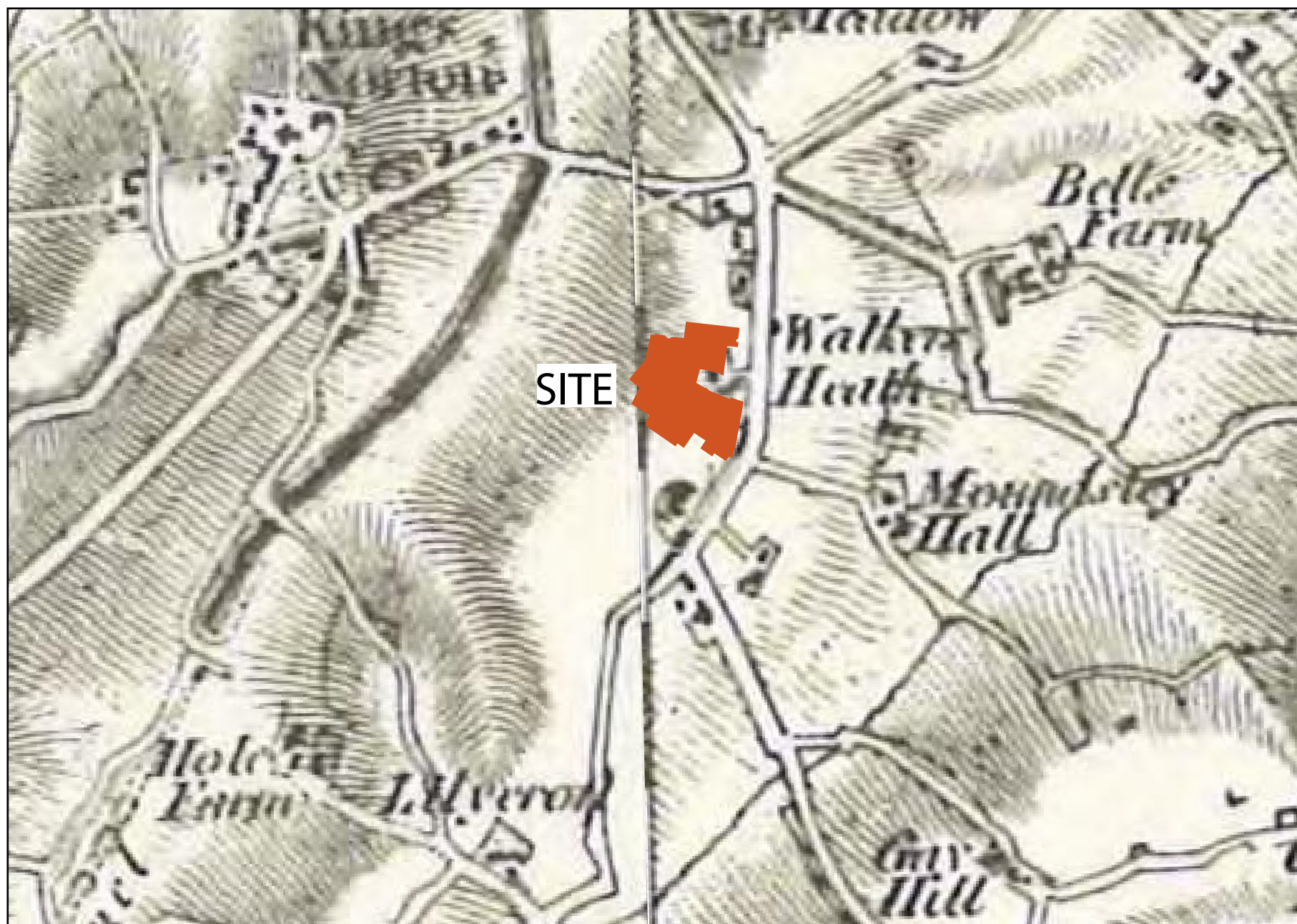


Fig 3: Detail from Ordnance Survey one inch to one mile map of 1831-1871



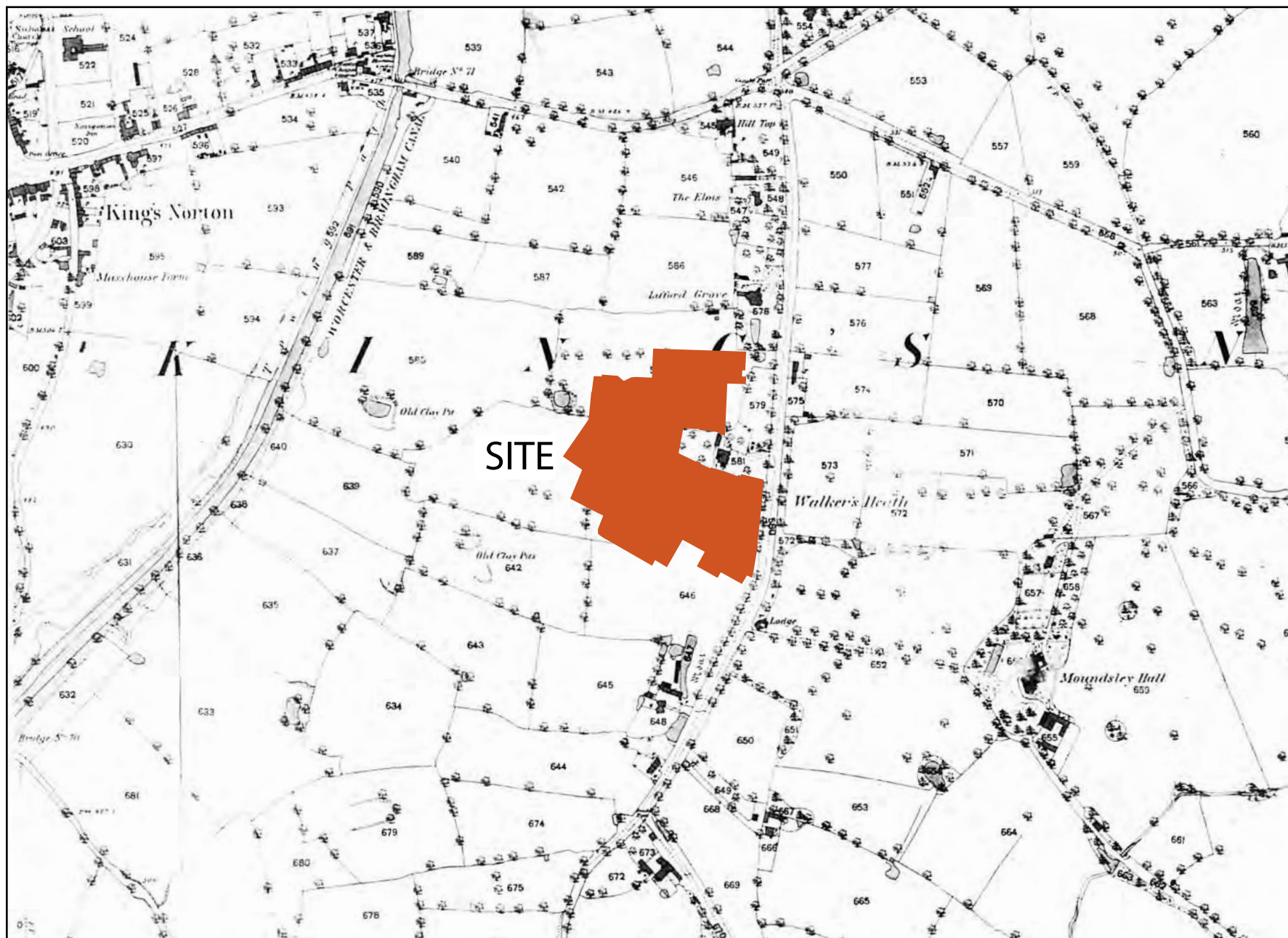


Fig 4: Detail from First Edition 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map of 1884



Fig 5: Detail from Revised Edition 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map of 1936





Fig 6: View of central part of site February 2013 looking east



Fig 7: View looking south-east across Monksway





Fig 8: View looking west towards Kings Norton, across line of Roman road



Fig 9: View looking south-west; mature tree probably on line of old field boundary



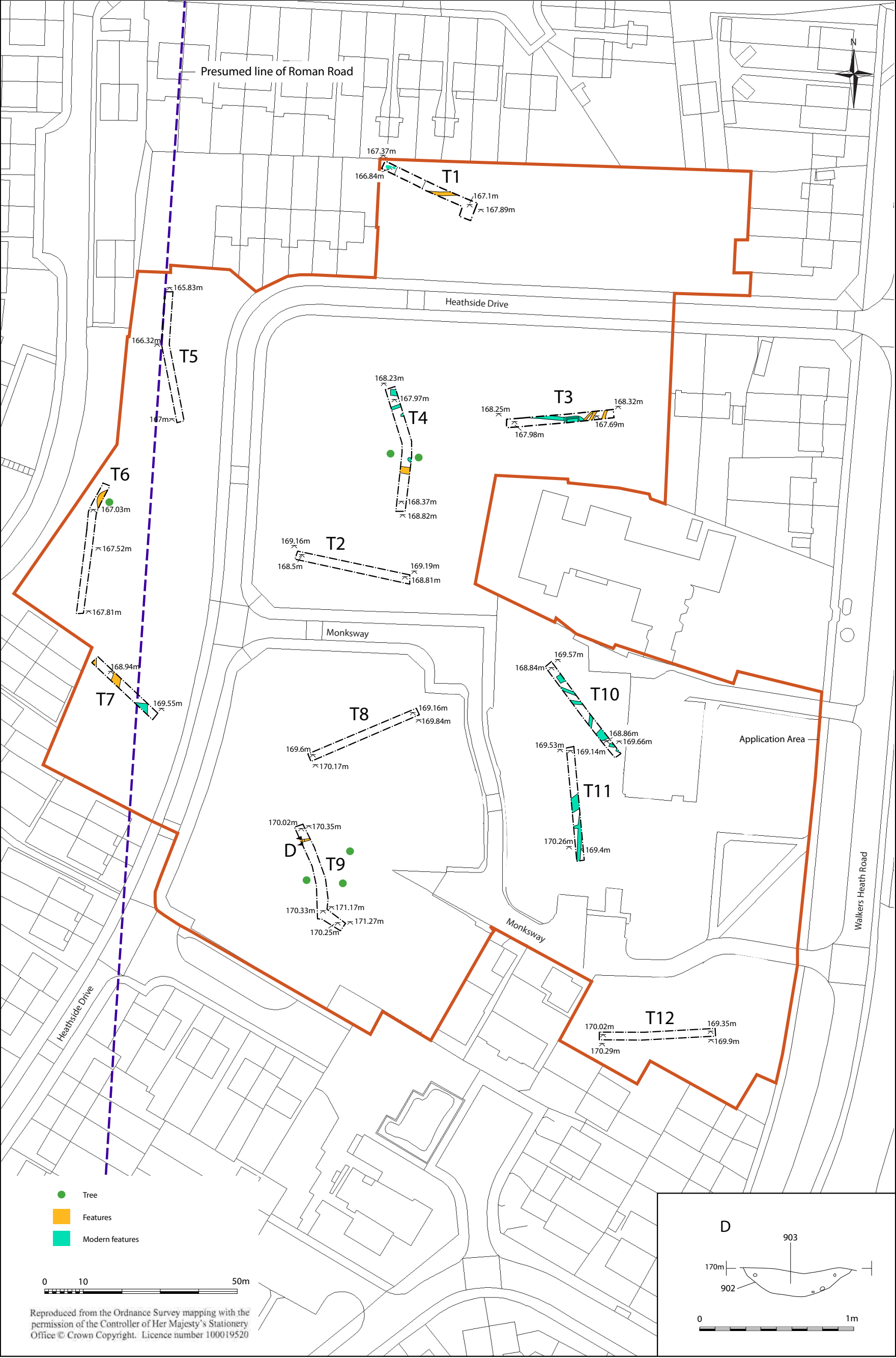


Fig 10: Location of trenches and section D

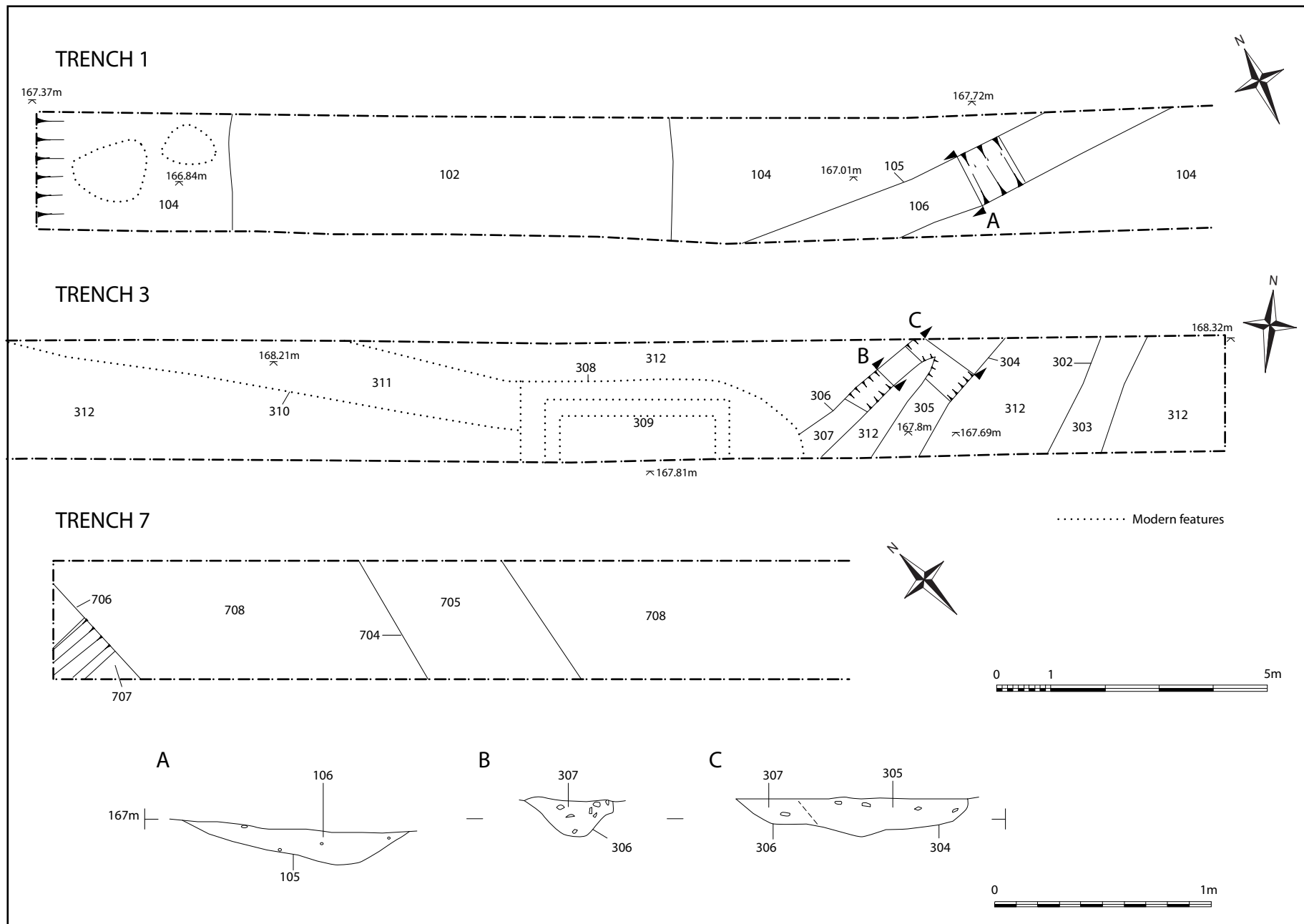


Fig 11: Trenches 1, 3 and 7 and sections A-C





Fig 12: Trench 1 looking north-west, with ditch 106 in the middle



Fig 13: Trench 2 looking ESE





Fig 14: Trench 3 looking east, with three gully cuts at the east end of the trench



Fig 15: Trench 4 looking north





Fig 16: Trench 5 looking south, with pipe trench in the north end of the trench



Fig 17: Trench 6 looking SSE, with pebbly pond fill at the north end of the trench





Fig 18: Trench 7 looking north-west



Fig 19: View of Trench 8 looking WSW, heavily waterlogged





Fig 20: Trench 9 looking NW



Fig 21: Trench 10 looking north-west, with modern rubbish and rubble deposits





Fig 22: Trench 11 looking SSE, with modern pits and sewer trench



Fig 23: Trench 12 looking west, with a layer of building debris along the middle of the trench